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Advice for the New Man

Foreign policy analysts offer their list of priorities



What should the U.S. do next about Iran, the Middle East, its frigid relations with the Soviet Union, its uneasy dealings with its allies, its frictions with the Third World? TIME asked a number of foreign affairs specialists. Excerpts from their replies:

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REAL TOADS, REAL TOADSTOOLS

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"To every thing there is a season," according to *Ecclesiastes*. One season not mentioned is the one we are in: a time of anger and frustration. Such a time is particularly dangerous when anger vents itself on objects peripheral to vital interests. We are obsessed by a single matter and forget strategy; we are hostage to hostages. Washington continues its graduated escalation against an implacable, irrational regime. That policy failed in Viet Nam. The primary problem is Soviet power; we risk an Iran and even a gulf under Soviet hegemony.

Ecclesiastes' other seasons include the time to build. We need to restrain our moralizing as much as we need to harness our anger. Recently American moralizers have tried to purify everything they could: foods, politicians, intelligence services, our foreign policy and even our imperfect friends abroad. Obsessed with individual rights and safety, we have added to our collective danger: the unreformed world beyond our reach contains real toads and real toadstools.

As a leading German newspaper has said, "The West is ruled by rather young and physically robust persons who, however, belong to a political gerontocracy ... given to risk-reduction and a yearning for stability."

In rebuilding American confidence and strength we need a commonsensical understanding of the relativity of impurities. Which is dirtier—environmental pollution or dangers of vast unemployment? American covert action capabilities or more Khomeinis?

Concerning energy, we must develop every cost-effective resource in North America—nuclear, shale, strip mining, hydroelectric and oil—and strip away the layers of environmental and other constraints. With our intelligence services smashed, we must rebuild them to include even the dirty-tricks departments we recently reviled. We abandoned conscription; now we need a citizen army. During détente we allowed the Soviets to overtake us in nearly every category of arms; now we must seriously rebuild.

The Soviets must be given to understand that we perceive their aim of hegemony and find it unacceptable. They also must understand that a strong, confident America is preferable to an angry and frustrated one.

Outlandish as this may seem in an election year, we deserve a Government of national unity, of bipartisan leadership, as evidence of American continuity and resolve. We owe this mainly to ourselves, but also to a world bewildered by our previous inconstancy.

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